



Series: Academic / Courses, Curriculum, Exams (A 2)
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Policy Title: Graduate Studies Leave of Absence

Parent Policy	A 4-01 Graduate Completion Program
Policy Administrator	Associate Provost, Research & Graduate Studies; and Registrar
Approving Body	Senate
Approval History	2026-04-28; Senate Motion #2025-26 – 047 2024-04-30; Senate Motion #2023/24 – 035 2023-12-05; Senate Motion #2023-24 – 016

Purpose:

The objectives of this policy are:

- To support graduate students as they balance academic pursuits with demands of life.
- To provide a system that encourages programs to manage student retention efforts with students who need to temporarily interrupt their program of study.
- To provide the University with a mechanism for tracking enrollment status.

Scope of this Policy:

All students enrolled in graduate programs at TWU.

Policy Statement:

A student who finds it necessary to interrupt their studies will apply for a leave of absence. Responsibility for approving a leave of absence rests with the Associate Provost, Graduate Studies. A leave of absence may be granted for the fall or spring terms (or, for programs that run through summer, also for the summer terms), to begin on the first day of the semester and end on the last day of the semester. The total duration for leaves of absence granted per program of study is dependent on the type of leave, up to a cumulative total of three years of on-leave status. Retroactive approval of a Leave of Absence will not normally be considered except under extraordinary circumstances.

Terms spent on-leave do not count toward time allowed for program completion (see parent policy).

Availability of university resources may be limited during a leave of absence.

A student who does not return to continuous enrollment following a leave of absence is eligible for program withdrawal.

A leave of absence cannot be granted if the student is undergoing disciplinary action from the University.

Awards for Students On-leave

A student on-leave will retain the full value of any award for which the terms and conditions are established by the university. Payments for said awards will be suspended during the leave and will resume upon the student's return to full-time study.

Awards for which the terms and conditions are not established by the university will be paid according to the terms and conditions of the granting agency.

Types of Leaves of Absence

- a. Bereavement leave
 - i. Bereavement/compassionate leave is provided for a student who is experiencing grief related to the death a loved one.
 - ii. Bereavement/compassionate leave may be limited to three consecutive terms.
 - iii. Supporting documentation may be required.
- b. Indigenous Student leave
 - i. Indigenous cultural leave is provided for a self-identifying Indigenous student for the purposes of family care, seasonal activities, traditional ceremonies, etc.
 - ii. Indigenous cultural leave is granted for one, two, or three terms at a time.
 - iii. Requests to extend time for degree completion will be considered upon request.
- c. Medical leave
 - i. Medical leave is provided for a student who encounters health issues that interfere with their ability to pursue their program of study.
 - ii. For each health reason, medical leave may be limited to six consecutive terms for doctoral programs and three consecutive terms for master's programs.
 - iii. Supporting documentation may be required.
- d. Parental leave
 - i. Parental leave is provided for a student who, as the biological, step, or adoptive parent, has caregiving responsibilities of a newborn, step, or adopted child or children, as in the case of multiples.
 - ii. Parental leave may be limited to three consecutive terms per childbirth or adoption.
 - iii. Supporting documentation may be required.
- e. Personal/Caregiver leave
 - a. Personal/caregiver leave is provided for a student who must attend to:
 - i. the health obligations of a member of their immediate family (dependent child, spouse, or dependent parent)
 - ii. matters involving urgent situations such as family violence (which otherwise do not fall under medical leave),
 - iii. matters related to death or disappearance (which otherwise do not fall under or require full bereavement leave),
 - iv. leave for extended court or jury duty.
 - v. Per program of study, personal/caregiver leave may be limited to six terms for doctoral programs and three terms for master's programs.

- f. Professional, Military, or Political Service leave
 - i. Professional, military, or political service leave is provided for a student who must be released from study, without penalty, to allow them to participate in workplace or political service obligations, or military training, courses, and operations.
 - ii. During professional, military, or political service leave, the student's status will be noted as on-leave.
 - iii. Supporting documentation may be required.

Definitions:

Leave of absence: Suspension of a student's program of study that does not count toward time for degree completion.

On-leave: Registration status of a graduate or doctoral student while on an approved leave of absence.

Program of study: A curriculum intended to lead to a degree.

Program withdrawal: Discontinuation of admittance in a program of study.

Procedures: None

Child Policies: None

Other Related Policies: A 2-07 Course Withdrawal; A 2-20 Request to Extend Time for Degree Completion